



## **Message from the Minister of Education**

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The Government of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago has designated the education system as one of the important means to develop the human resource capability needed to achieve the goals of the VISION 2020 Statements.

As Trinidad and Tobago moves toward the attainment of developed country status by 2020, the Ministry of Education strives to ensure that:

1. Schools are suitably prepared and equipped
2. Students are able to benefit from lifelong learning opportunities
3. The education system supports national development goals

The Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Science, Technology and Tertiary Education are therefore working together in the development of a seamless education system that facilitates student progress from one level to another from pre-school to the primary and secondary levels through to post primary and tertiary levels.

The need for change has been recognised for many years as reflected in the Education Policy Paper 1993—2003. The Ministry is implementing many of the recommendations for secondary education, through the Secondary Education Modernization Programme (SEMP). Of particular importance is the revised and modernised secondary school curriculum.

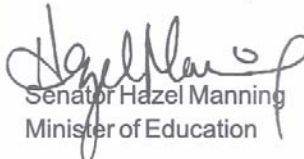
This curriculum is designed to ensure that all students cover a basic core of learning that will prepare them for further study and will give them the discipline required for entry to the world of work. As a result of these curriculum changes, the systems that we use to examine and certify our students are also undergoing review and change.

The National Certificate of Secondary Education (NCSE) is a most important initiative since it provides a means of assessment for national qualifications. NCSE is a system of examination and certification that is being developed and put in place to capture and record all the positive experiences that students have while at school.

So far, officers of the Ministry of Education and stakeholders have developed a system for the NCSE at the First Level, that is, at the Form 3 level. The plans and the proposals for the Second Level of the NCSE, that is the Form 4 level, are being presented through a series of consultations to share with the public the plans to implement the NCSE. The Ministry of Education is hosting these consultations in order to secure feedback on the NCSE before finalisation of these assessment procedures.

You are asked to participate in the consultations and work with the Ministry as we develop a system that will allow for improvements in the education system of Trinidad and Tobago.

I look forward to receiving your active participation and feedback on these important issues so that the national assessment procedure we develop is one in which we have confidence and of which we can all be justifiably proud.

  
Senator Hazel Manning  
Minister of Education

## **Introduction**

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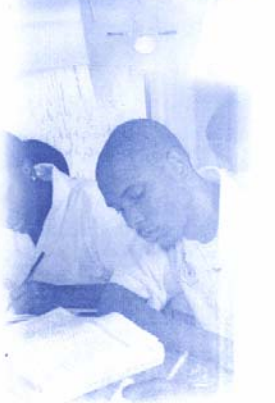
The proposed National Certificate of Secondary Education (NCSE), is a new system of certification for secondary education in Trinidad and Tobago. It also signals a forward step in the establishment of measures to promote lifelong learning and the establishment of a National Assessment System, which have become key features of policy commitments in the local education system.

The purpose of this discussion paper is to explore some of the issues associated with the development and implementation of the National Certificate of Secondary Education in Trinidad and Tobago. The issues mentioned in this paper, and the accompanying questions, are not exhaustive: they are designed to be discussion stimulators. You are invited to use this paper to respond to the issues raised or to identify other issues through the various consultation mechanisms that will be available.

It is hoped that at the end of the consultation process, a Green Paper, which incorporates the proposed policy with the major views of the national stakeholders, will be developed.

The consultation process will include several Focus Group meetings to be held throughout Trinidad and Tobago and a National Consultation open to all local stakeholders in education. Through this consultation process the national community will help to:

- Develop clear procedures so that students, parents/caregivers, teachers and employers understand the proposed certification process.
- Provide a mechanism that ensures the continuous improvement of the certificate of education so that it responds to the changing needs of young people and better supports the economic and social development of the state.
- Recommend approaches, structures and strategies that seek to ensure that all young people can achieve success in educational and training pathways.





## **1. Background to the Proposed NCSE**

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In 1996 the Government of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago, as part of its commitment to a comprehensive reform and expansion of the secondary school system, adopted the report of the National Task Force on Education as educational policy. Among the deficiencies in the education system that the reform programme sought to address were:

- an unacceptably low level of academic achievement among certain students
- unsatisfactory personal and social development outcomes
- curricular arrangements whose major outcomes were linked to the attainment of a minimum of five General passes in the Caribbean Examinations Council (CXC) examination.

These deficiencies in the education system along with enormous changes on a global, national and local level have implications for what young people need to learn. The rapid growth of technology, including global communication technology, globalization of trade and commerce, increased population movements, demand for a highly skilled workforce, coupled with a shortage in some areas, highlight the need for people in a knowledge-based economy to be more creative, innovative and enterprising.

The emergent reform programme, informed by the National Task Force on Education and contemporary research in education with support from the Inter American Development Bank (IADB), has been designed to foster improvement nationally in educational equity and quality, with the aim being to:

- provide opportunities for all students to develop spiritually, morally, emotionally, intellectually and physically
- develop in all students attitudes of honesty, tolerance, integrity and efficiency
- provide opportunities for self-directed and life-long learning
- provide opportunities for all students to develop numeracy, literacy, scientific and technological skills
- promote national development and economic sustainability
- promote an understanding of the principles and practices of a democratic society
- equip all students with basic life skills
- promote the preservation and protection of the environment
- develop in all students an understanding of the importance of a healthy lifestyle
- help all students acquire the knowledge, skills and attitudes necessary to be intelligent consumers
- provide opportunities for all students to develop an understanding and appreciation of the diversity of our culture
- provide opportunities for all students to develop an appreciation for beauty and human achievement in the visual and performing arts

## **Background to the Proposed NCSE (continued)**

An analysis of the philosophy of the Ministry of Education's Policy Paper (1993-2003) and of the goals of education derived from it combined with the research conducted in developed nations, has led to the identification of six areas in which all secondary students must achieve. These areas are universally accepted and have been described as essential learning outcomes. These outcomes help to define standards of attainment for all secondary students.

The six outcomes are:

- Aesthetic Expression
- Citizenship
- Communication
- Personal Development
- Problem Solving
- Technological Competence

The reform programme for the secondary system has been multifaceted and takes into account the philosophies, goals and current research in education. An integral part of the reform initiative is the reorganizing of the secondary curriculum and the introduction of a National Certificate of Secondary Education (NCSE) to give appropriate emphasis to a common core of academic subject while promoting personal and social development. It is this new NCSE examination and certification system that the remainder of this document addresses.





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## 2. Rationale for the Proposed NCSE

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Trinidad and Tobago's society, like that of the international community within which it functions, is characterized by rapid and enormous changes, that have implications for what young people need to learn in order to be creative, productive and confident in today's society. There is a new frame of reference for learning - lifelong and lifewide - which implies the need for changes in the way formal educational institutions teach and assess students. The NCSE programme seeks to address this need.

The NCSE Programme is also designed to address the problem that over 50% of the school population leaves school without full certification either through CXC or the National Examinations Council (NEC), after five (5) years of secondary education.

The purpose of the programme is to provide a means of assessment that is more sensitive to the varying interests, abilities, needs and learning styles of our student population.

The NCSE programme is designed to allow teachers to collect data on students' learning on a continuous basis throughout their secondary school tenure. It is a deliberate, planned process geared towards the promotion of student growth, improvement of instruction, modification of the programme and recognition of accomplishment. The NCSE assessments will utilize different assessment formats for paper and pencil and performance assessments in order to guarantee that valid inferences can be made about student learning.

The NCSE, consequently, will provide certification that reflects all aspects of a student's successful experiences in the Form 1 to Form 5 period of secondary education.



### 3. Draft Policy

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#### 3.1 Preamble

It is recognized that traditional certification systems such as CXC and NEC are inadequate for an era of lifelong learning. These traditional certification systems do not cater to the need for a flexible framework for progress through the educational ladder, or articulation between qualification pathways. Students, who have varying interests, abilities, needs and learning styles, and who would have successfully completed various aspects of the school curriculum as well as achieved excellence in non-academic areas, are seriously disadvantaged, since without certification it is a challenge for them to either enter the world of work or pursue further studies.

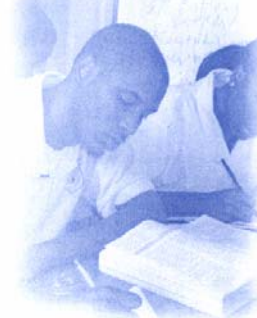
In response to this need for review of the existing certification system, the NCSE Working Committee was set up to develop a draft policy document for the new assessment and certification system. (See Appendix 1 for the Terms of Reference of the NCSE Working Committee).

The NCSE Working Committee used the Education Policy (1993-2003) as a resource document and has echoed its philosophical statements in the following:

#### We believe that:

- every child has a right to an education.
- every child has the ability to learn.
- students vary in ability both physically and intellectually, and that the education system should provide programmes that are adaptable to their varying abilities.
- the learning environment and experiences should enable each child to fulfill his/her potential.
- students learn best when learning reflects their interest and they are engaged in meaningful activities.
- learning should be active, creative and relevant to student needs and interests and should relate to real-life issues.
- the innovative and achievement-oriented potential of students should be encouraged through co-curricula and community activities.
- the National Certificate of Secondary Education (NCSE) programme will enhance the development of each child's full capability regardless of gender, ethnic, economic, social or religious background.
- the NCSE programme promotes the all-round development of the child.
- the NCSE programme promotes equality of educational opportunity and students are credited for all meaningful activities in which they engage.
- the NCSE programme promotes opportunities for lifelong learning and continuous self-development.





## **5. Policy Implementation**

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### **5.1 NCSE Steering Committee**

The Working Committee recommends that Cabinet appoint a Steering Committee to effect the implementation of the NCSE programme.

The Division of Educational Research and Evaluation, under the auspices of the reorganized, updated, fully staffed National Examinations Council will be responsible for the NCSE.

Sub-committees responsible for Monitoring and Evaluation, Moderation of the internal assessment process, Item Writing and Banking, Test Administration, Test Marking, Profile Preparation, Certification and Certificate Preparation, Public Awareness, Scholarship Issues would need to be set up.

The role to be played by the Caribbean Examinations Council in the NCSE is to be explored.

Provision has been made by the Ministry of Education to acquire the resources needed to establish and implement the NCSE.

### **5.2 Implications and Assumptions for Successful Implementation of the NCSE**

1. Professional development of teachers and Ministry of Education staff responsible for examination setting, marking and analysis.
2. Support systems
3. Fully staffed schools
4. Supply teachers
5. Adequate resources
6. Monitoring and supervision system
7. Revisiting the roles and responsibilities of various divisions in the Ministry of Education
8. Increased responsibilities for the Ministry of Education staff, such as:
  - assessment syllabus writing
  - item writing and task designing
  - item review
  - construction of forms for use on the OMR optical mark reader
  - testing of items
  - item analysis
  - test construction
  - test review
  - final formatting for implementation by examinations
  - marking of scripts
  - OMR scanning of score sheets for data capture
  - analysis of results
  - examiners meetings

- preparation of student exam slips
- preparation of certificates
- preparation of examination reports
- dissemination of examination reports
- evaluation reports by DERE
- plans for dealing with problems emanating e.g., workshops, curriculum changes, assessment changes, public awareness, public acceptance, etc.

9. Increased staff for various Ministry of Education divisions
10. Remedial programmes/summer school
11. Funding

### **Questions for Discussion**

- Does the NCSE adequately meet the goals of the education system as outlined?
- What should be the basis for awarding/achieving a NCSE Level 1 and NCSE Level II Certificate?
- Do you agree with the Credit tariff: 1 credit = 15 hours of work inside or outside the classroom?
- Should certification include credits, grades and/or points?
- What skills, knowledge, experiences, service to the community or personal accomplishments should the NCSE Certificate recognize and report?
- Should the NCSE Level II be a 'certificate' of completion, achievement, participation, or some combination of these?
- What value will the NCSE certificates have to Business Institutions, Tertiary and other institutions and the Ministry of Education?
- What measures should be put in place to ensure quality assurance of the assessment and certification process?
- Is it reasonable to expect that NCSE certification will be based on eight (8) core subjects or should some alternative number be used?





## 6. Bibliography

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Credit and Assessment Committee. The National Certificate of Secondary Education- Part 1. Report of the Credit and Assessment Committee. (Unpublished draft, 1995)

Curriculum Development Division. Evaluation Report of the NCSE Pilot Project 1994-1997 Trinidad, Ministry of Education, March 1998

National Task Force on Education. Education Policy Paper (1993-2003) White Paper. Trinidad, Ministry of Education, March 1993.

Division of Educational Research & Evaluation. The National Certificate of Secondary Education, Part 1. Draft for discussion by NCSE Committee. 2000.

Division of Educational Research & Evaluation. Draft Assessment Manual. 2000

New Zealand Qualifications Authority at <http://www.nzqa.govt.nz/ncea/>



## **Appendix I**

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### **DRAFT TERMS OF REFERENCE OF THE NCSE WORKING COMMITTEE**

- a. Develop a draft policy document for NCSE Levels 1 & 2
  - Review the Curriculum Division's "Evaluation of NCSE Pilot Project 1994 to 1997"
  - Review the draft suggestions for NCSE Level 1, in the Draft Assessment Manual
- b. Discuss draft policy document with Heads of Divisions/Ex-officio members.
- c. Discuss draft policy document with Minister of Education, Permanent Secretaries and Chief Education Officer and obtain their approval to share the document with key stakeholders.
- d. Develop a plan to hold focus group meetings with key stakeholders, such as TTUTA, the Secondary School Principals' Association, Business Community, School Supervisors, Curriculum Officers and teachers to get feedback before finalizing the document .
- e. Review and finalize the draft NCSE policy document, using feedback received.
- f. Develop a pilot programme for the implementation of NCSE Level 1, beginning in the first term in the 2003/2004 school year.





## **Appendix II**

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### **ORIGINAL MEMBERS OF THE NCSE WORKING COMMITTEE**

#### **Division of Educational Research & Evaluation (DERE)**

Ms Yvonne Lewis - Director of Educational Research & Evaluation (Chairperson)  
Dr Marva Ribeiro - Assistant Dir. DERE  
Ms Patricia Paul-McDavid - Educational Testing Officer - DERE

#### **Division of Schools Supervision**

Mr Roland Maharaj - Schools Supervisor III (South Eastern Ed. Division)

#### **Division of Educational Planning**

Ms Bernadine Thomas - Senior Planning Officer (DEP)  
Ms Lisa Henry-David - Educational Research Officer 11 (DEP)

#### **Division of Curriculum Development**

Dr Ival Melville-Myers - Curriculum Coordinator (DCD)  
Mr Henry Saunders - Curriculum Coordinator (DCD)  
Ms Erlene Benjamin - Curriculum Coordinator (DCD)

#### **Technical/Vocational Unit**

Mr Nazeer Khan - Curriculum Officer (Tech/Voc)

#### **Examinations Unit**

Ms Janice John - Supervisor of Examinations (MOE)

#### **SEMPCU**

Dr Stephen Joseph - Assistant Programme Co-ordinator, Qualitative Improvement  
Ms Sitara Gardner - Education Specialist: Assessment, Testing & Evaluation  
(Secretary to the Committee)

#### **TTUTA**

Ms Sally Siriram - First Vice President (TTUTA)

#### **Principals' Associations**

Ms Denise Hernandez - Representative of the Association of Principals of Public Secondary Schools  
Father Mendes - Representative of the Association of Principals of Assisted Secondary Schools  
Mr Suresh Ramlogan - President of the Trinidad and Tobago Association of Private Secondary Schools.

#### **National Parent-Teacher Association**

Ms Maureen Taylor-Ryan - Representative of the National Parent-Teacher Association

### ***Ex-Officio Members of the NCSE Working Committee***

Dr Janet Stanley-Marcano	-	Chief Education Officer
Mr Maurice Chin Aleong	-	Programme Coordinator, SEMPCU
Mr Lloyd Pujadas	-	Director of Curriculum Development
Ms Janice Blackman	-	Director of Schools Supervision (Ag)
Ms Jennifer Hussain	-	Director of Educational Planning
Ms Sharon Douglass-Mangroo	-	Director of Operations
Ms Paula Daniel	-	Director of Educational Services (Ag)

The members of the NCSE working committee began meeting every month from November 27, 2001. They began by conducting a review of available documents on the existing NCSE. Those documents served as a valuable resource for the discussions that ensued. Following this, sub-committees were formed to work on draft papers, which were presented for discussion at the monthly meetings.

### ***Sub-Committees***

#### ***1. Rationale, philosophy & overall goals of the NCSE***

- Mr Henry Saunders
- Dr Ival Melville Myers
- Ms Erlene Benjamin

#### ***2. Resource Management***

- Ms Janice John
- Ms Lisa Henry David

#### ***3. Credit System***

- Dr Marva Ribeiro





## **PRESENT MEMBERS OF THE NCSE WORKING COMMITTEE**

### **Division of Educational Research & Evaluation (DERE)**

Ms Yvonne Lewis - Director of Educational Research & Evaluation (Chairperson)  
Dr Marva Ribeiro - Assistant Dir. DERE  
Mr Harrilal Seecharan - Assistant Dir. DERE  
Ms Patricia Paul-McDavid - Educational Testing Officer - DERE

### **Division of Schools Supervision**

Dr George Gowrie - Schools Supervisor III (South Eastern Ed. Division)

### **Division of Educational Planning**

Ms Naseem Farrier - Senior Planning Officer (Ag.) (DEP)

### **Division of Curriculum Development**

Ms Sharon Mangroo - Director of Curriculum Development (DCD)  
Mr Henry Saunders - Curriculum Coordinator (DCD)

### **Technical/Vocational Unit**

Ms Dipwatee Maharaj - Chief Examination Officer (NEC)

### **Examinations Unit**

Ms Janice John - Supervisor of Examinations (MOE)

### **SEMPCU**

Dr Stephen Joseph - Assistant Programme Co-ordinator, Qualitative Improvement  
Mrs Gersha Pierre - Education Specialist: Assessment, Testing & Evaluation  
(Secretary to the Committee)

### **TTUTA**

Ms Sally Siriram - First Vice President (TTUTA)

### **Principals' Associations**

Ms. Denise Hernandez - Representative of the Association of Principals of Public Secondary Schools  
Father Mendes - Representative of the Association of Principals of Assisted Secondary Schools  
Rev. Errol Joseph - President of the Trinidad and Tobago Association of Private Secondary Schools.

### **National Parent-Teacher Association**

Ms Maureen Taylor-Ryan - Representative of the National Parent-Teacher Association

## Appendix III

### FREQUENTLY USED TERMS

**ACHIEVEMENT STANDARDS** are derived from the National Curriculum statements for secondary schools. They define a coherent area of knowledge, understanding or skills and provide criteria for assessing student performance. They do not specify the content or how it must be taught. They do not decide on the particular assessments to be carried out. Instead they give broad explanations about how students are to be assessed e.g., internal (performance based assessment and external examinations).

**PERFORMANCE CRITERIA** suggest the evidence required to establish that the learner has achieved that particular specific learning outcome.

Hence students can achieve standards by providing evidence of their learning from direct observation, paper and pencil tests, spoken presentation, laboratory work and other types of performances.

Some standards lend themselves to **INTERNAL ASSESSMENTS** which must be well planned and **EXTERNALLY MODERATED** (before, during and after assessment), while others can be assessed by a written examination. The written component will be assessed **externally** by NCSE examination and credits will be awarded.

**THE CREDIT** indicates how long it will take a learner to complete the standard. For Trinidad and Tobago, one credit equates to 15 hours of work inside and or outside the classroom. **It is not a time limit for the learning to be achieved.** It is an agreed value for calculating credits. Individual learners will be able to earn any number of credits within a learning programme.

Each achievement standard describes the standard required to achieve the credits available. Credits may also be awarded at different levels of achievement e.g., A, B and C or Achievement, Merit and Excellence or by a point system which could contribute to the award of scholarships.

An agreed number of credits will be used to determine award of the **NCSE Level II Certificate**. This agreed number will include a minimum number of credits in English and Mathematics.

Achievement in extra-curricular and community activities will also be defined by written unit standards by experts in the field e.g. Guides, Scouts, Cadet, Swimming. These will be validated by relevant personnel and made available to the National Examinations Council for incorporation into the qualifications framework. Credits achieved in these areas will appear on student's profile sheet (transcript).

A system will be set up which will make provision for assignment of credits from Caribbean Examinations Council, Royal School of Music and any other suggested examination bodies. An expert team will determine the process for applying for credits for award of the NCSE Level II certificate.





**Achievement standards for Forms 4 and 5 have not yet been agreed upon.** However, this opportunity is taken to give some examples to illustrate some of the explanations above.

Specific learning outcomes for these standards can be found in any curriculum document at the particular year levels. Thus assessing standards will allow each school or institution to use its own programme of work and strategies to achieve the required standards.

The SEMP curriculum is the official curriculum document for the NCSE programme.

The examples presented in **Appendix IV** below show three subjects defined by an identification number, achievement standards, credits, and type of assessment.



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## Appendix IV

### Level II Achievement Standards

#### English

STANDARD NUMBER	STANDARD	NUMBER OF CREDITS
L2E 1000	1.1 Produce creative writing	2 credits - external
L2E 1001	1.2 Produce formal writing	2 credits - external
L2E 1002	1.3 Read, study and show understanding of extended written text(s)	2 credits - external
L2E 1003	1.4 Read, study and show understanding of a number of short written texts	2 credits - internal
L2E 1004	1.5 View/listen to, study and show understanding of a visual or oral text	2 credits - internal
L2E 1005	1.6 Read and show understanding of unfamiliar texts	2 credits - external
L2E 1006	1.7 Deliver a speech in a formal situation	2 credits - internal
L2E 1007	1.8 Produce a media or dramatic presentation	2 credits - internal
L2E 1008	1.9 Research, organize and present	2 credits - internal

#### Drama

STANDARD NUMBER	STANDARD	NUMBER OF CREDITS and Assessment
L2DR 1000	1.1 Use drama techniques	3 credits - internal
L2DR 1001	1.2 Use elements and conventions to devise and perform drama	3 credits - internal
L2DR 1002	1.3 Demonstrate knowledge of a drama or theatre form in performance	1 credits - internal
L2DR 1003	1.4 Perform an acting role	3 credits - internal
L2DR 1004	1.5 Perform a technical or production role	2 credits - internal
L2DR 1005	1.6 Understand and reflect on drama processes and performance, applied to new context (s)	3 credits - external





## Level II Achievement Standards

### Science

STANDARD NUMBER	STANDARD	NUMBER OF CREDITS and Assessment
L2IS 1000	1.1 Carry out a practical science investigation with direction	4 credits - internal
L2IS 1001	1.2 Research, with direction, how science and technology are related	1 credits - internal
L2IS 1002	1.3 Demonstrate an understanding of living systems including the transfer of genetic information	4 credits - external
L2IS 1003	1.4 Demonstrate an understanding of the particle nature, and other properties of matter.	3 credits - external
L2IS 1004	1.5 Describe properties, and reactions reactions of groups of related substances	4 credits - external
	1.6 Demonstrate an understanding understanding of energy, energy conversions and their uses	4 credits - external
	1.7 Demonstrate an understanding understanding of the dynamics of the process of the working human body and what contributes to maintaining a healthy lifestyle	4 credits - internal and external

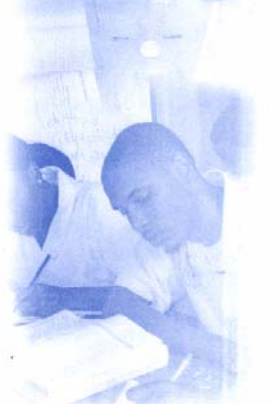
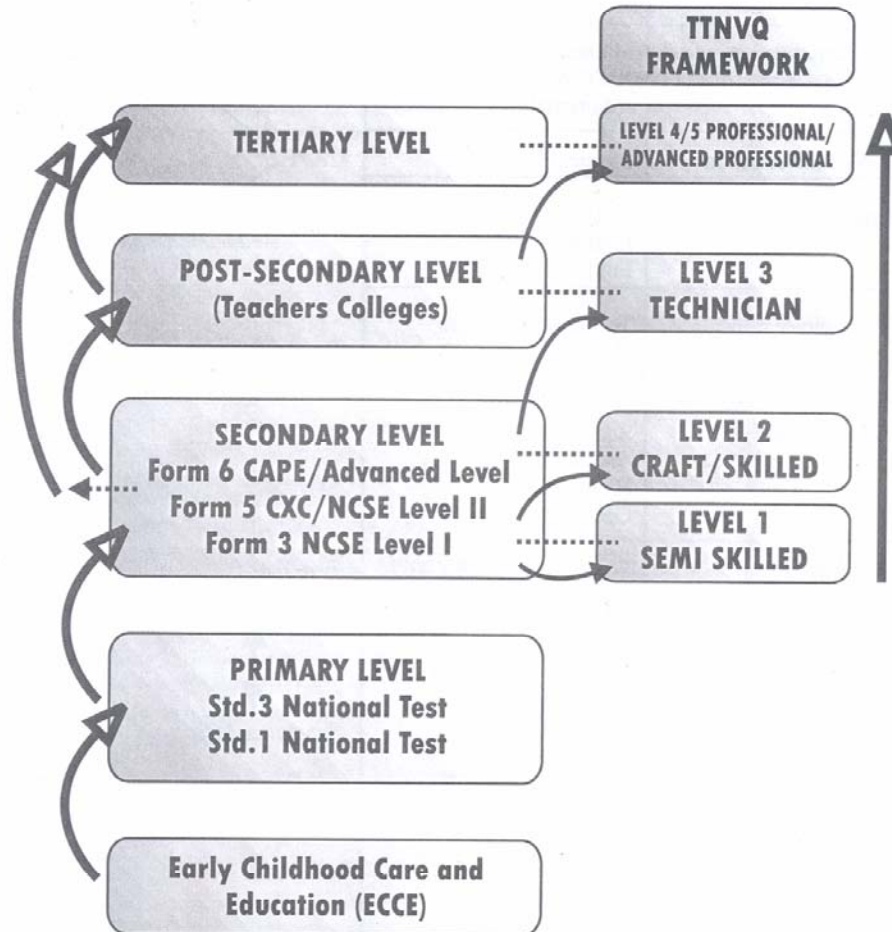


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## Appendix V

### Qualifications Framework



## Appendix VI

### Draft Assessment Framework

Years 1 - 3 Assessment Available NCSE Level 1	Years 4 - 5 Assessments Available NCSE Level II & CXC	Years 6 <sub>1</sub> - 6 <sub>2</sub> Assessments Available <i>CAPE, Cambridge Advanced Levels, NCSE Level II Specialized Craft</i>
Mathematics	Mathematics ( <i>CXC &amp; NCSE</i> ) Additional Maths ( <i>CXC</i> )	<p>Technical Programme</p> <p>CAPE</p> <p>Academic Programme</p>
Physical Education	Physical Education	
English	English ( <i>NCSE</i> ) English A ( <i>CXC</i> ) English B ( <i>CXC</i> )	
Technology Education	Technology Studies ( <i>NCSE</i> ) Technical Studies ( <i>CXC</i> )	<p>Cambridge A' Levels → Academic Programme</p>
Social Studies	Social Studies ( <i>NCSE &amp; CXC</i> ) History ( <i>CXC</i> ) Geography ( <i>CXC</i> )	
Spanish	Spanish ( <i>NCSE &amp; CXC</i> ) French ( <i>CXC</i> )	Two-Year Sandwich Programme
Visual & Performing Arts	Art and Craft ( <i>CXC &amp; NCSE</i> ) Music ( <i>NCSE &amp; CXC</i> ) Dance ( <i>NCSE</i> ) Drama ( <i>NCSE</i> )	<p>Specialized Craft</p>
Integrated Science	Integrated Science ( <i>NCSE &amp; CXC</i> ) Chemistry ( <i>CXC</i> ) Physics ( <i>CXC</i> ) Biology ( <i>CXC</i> )	

Column 1 shows the required basic core of subjects that students should complete at the lower Secondary Level.

Column 2 shows a list of available subjects from which students may choose in Forms 4 and 5.

Column 3 shows what is available at the Post Secondary Level.